(a) whether Government is going to diltute its stand on market access for foreign farm products just opposite the stand taken by the Government during the last Doha Round of WTO trade talks;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of impact it is likely to have on Indian agriculture due to foreign food imports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The principal aim of India's negotiating strategy in the agriculture negotiations has consistently been to protect the interests of farmers particularly with regard to their food and livelihood security. No change in approach is contemplated.

(c) Does not arise.

Effect of import of palm oil

441. SHRI A. ELAVARASAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has allowed the import of palm oil for domestic consumption still on high quantity which has caused serious impact on palm cultivation and allied domestic industries;

(b) if so, whether Government will consider to reduce such huge import of palm oil from other countries and will initiate *adhoc* board for development of palm cultivation and allied small industries;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA): (a) The Government has allowed import of edible Oils because the domestic production of edible oils not sufficient to meet the country's demand. About 40% of edible oils requirement is met through imports. Palm oil is the major edible oils imported in the country, which constitutes about 80% of the total imports

(b) to (d) No, Sir. In the absence of imports, domestic availability will be seriously affected which may lead to increase in domestic prices. However, National Oilseeds and Vegetable Oil Development Board (NOVOD), Directorate of Oilseeds Development, Hyderabad, Oil Palm India Ltd. (OPIL), Kottyam (A Joint Venture of Government of India and Government of Kerala), National Research Centre for Palm Oil of Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR), etc. are already functioning to take care of the growth of the palm oil sector.

FIEO's help for increasing exports

442. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has received any request from the Federation of Indian Exports Organization (FIEO) to help growth of exports in respect of specific items of exports especially Tea exports;

(b) if so, the demand made by the FIEO; and

(c) the Governments response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir; FIEO requested for inclusion of Tea in Vishesh Krishi Gramin Udyog Yojna (VKGUY) Scheme.

(c) Due to the paucity of funds, their request could not be considered.

Decline in industrial output

443. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether industrial output dipped by 2.3 per cent worst in 16 years in March this year, while production of consumer durable had out shown giving a ray of hope;

(b) if so, the comparative month to month industrial output during last six months; and

(c) the reasons for the sharp decline in March, 2009?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA): (a) and (b) As per the revised estimates released by Central Statistical Organisation, the industrial growth, measured in terms of Index of Industrial Production (IIP) registered a growth of (-)0.8 % in March, 2009 compared to the growth rate of 5.5% in March, 2008. The consumer durables has been recording positive growth since January, 2009. The industrial growth measured in terms of IIP during last six months of 2007-08 and 2008-09 is given below:

Index of Industrial Production

(Growth in %)

Month	Consumer Durables		Overall Industrial Growth	
	2007-08	2008-09	2007-08	2008-09
October	9.0	-1.6	12.2	0.1
November	-5.5	0.3	4.9	2.5
December	2.8	-4.2	8.0	-0.2
January	-0.5	2.1	6.2	1.0
February	3.1	5.8	9.5	-0.7
March	-2.0	8.2	5.5	-0.8
April-March	-1.0	4.4	8.5	2.6

SOURCE: Central Statistical Organisation.

(c) The decline in industrial growth in 2008-09 was primarily due to global economic slowdown. The slowdown has affected some of the export oriented industries in India, such as textiles,